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# READING MATERIALS PREFERENCE AND FAMILY SUPPORT TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF FARMER CHILDREN'S READING INTEREST

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## **Abstract**

This research discusses about reading materials preference and family support towards the development of farmer children's reading interest in Cengkong Village, Karawang, West Java Province, Indonesia. The research aims to discover the type of reading materials favored by farmer children and identify family support towards the development of farmer children's reading interest in Cengkong Village, Karawang, West Java Province, Indonesia. This is a qualitative research with case study method. Informants in this research were four farmer children, three parents, and a grandmother of one of the children. Results show that those four farmer children in Cengkong Village already had got reading interest. Kinds of reading materials which attract and are needed by the farmer children were books with abundant illustrations, pictures, and colors. Besides, family support towards children's reading interest was still lacking. Parents had to work on the farm and it was hard to spend time with children, not to mention the reading activity. This was caused by economic factors and work demands.

**Keywords:** children reading interest, farmer children, reading habit, Cengkong Village, Indonesia

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Reading interest is the motivational source for someone to analyze, remember, and evaluate what has been read. It can be through experience or other activities which will affect reading development process. If reading interest is grown from an early stage, it will be the foundation to life-long learning establishment. Developing children's reading interest needs to be started by motivating them to read so that it reveals the importance of reading for kids. Besides, the types of reading materials can also affect the development of children's reading interest.

This research discusses about reading materials preference and family support towards the development of farmer children's reading interest in Cengkong Village, Karawang, West Java Province, Indonesia. Farmer children lived with parents who work as farmland cultivators, either both or one of whom, as sharecroppers (farmers who do not have their own farmland) or tenant farmers (farmers who partly own the farmland). The problem that was usually happened was that most of the farmer children did not continue the formal education more than elementary school, or junior high school. Factors which caused these farmer children's education are based on internal and external factors they had. The internal factors were the children's desire to go to school. The external factors come from the parents' economic condition and children's social environment (Briggita, 2017).

Farmer family earns the main income from farming. Generally, farmers live in rural areas and largely in suburbs. Farmer society stratification is measured by farmland ownership and it has its own classification (Darwis, 2008), namely:

1. Land owners are the ones who do not cultivate their own farmland. The land is cultivated by workers in a way of profit sharing.
2. Tenant farmers are farmers who have farmland yet limited and they cultivate their own farmland.
3. Landless farmers do not have farmland and work for someone else.

Karawang City is one of the biggest granaries in West Java Province, Indonesia. According data collected from Central Bureau of Statistics, in Indonesian called Badan Pusat Statistik, of Purwasari Sub-District (2018), Cengkong Village has 4.52 km<sup>2</sup> total area of land and rice field area in the amount of 1.98 km<sup>2</sup>. The geographical condition of Cengkong Village

is lowland with the average heat temperature 37°C per year, rainfall  $\pm$  21,17 mm every year, and wind blows on an average 10 km/h. Purwasari Sub-district area is  $\pm$  2,786.5 ha (<https://www.karawangkab.go.id/dokumen/profile-purwasari>) which consists of:

Table 1. Areas of Purwasari Sub-district

No.	Caption	Land's Area (ha)
1	Rice fields	1,556.5 ha
2	Solid ground	1,230.5 ha
3	Technical rice fields	1,556 ha
4	Non-technical rice fields	21,414 ha
5	Rainfed rice fields	5,413 ha

Source: <https://www.karawangkab.go.id/dokumen/profile-purwasari>

Cengkong Village itself has total population, noted in 2017, amounting 4,593 males and 4,527 females with 3,001 householders (<https://karawangkab.bps.go.id>). Based on the explanation above, this research is expected to answer research inquiries, namely:

1. What are the kinds of reading materials favored and needed by farmer children in Cengkong Village?
2. How the family support towards the development of farmer children is's reading interest in Cengkong Village?

As for the research purposes, there are:

1. To discover the kinds of reading materials favored and needed by farmer children in Cengkong Village.
2. To identify the support from family towards the development of children's reading interest.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Earlier researches about children's reading interest has a lot been the discussion. Subjects chosen usually are students, starting from kindergarten to middle school. A research done by Maharani in 2017 titled *Minat Baca Anak-anak di Kampoeng Baca Kabupaten Jember (Children's Reading Interest in Kampoeng Baca Jember District)* was a descriptive study using a qualitative approach. The technique of collecting data was through

observation, interview, and fieldnotes. The research result showed that reading habit did not significantly affect the society's reading skills in Kampoeng Baca.

Ogunrombi and Adio (1995) in their research about factors affecting reading interest in secondary schools in Nigeria generated findings that the family background of students does not contribute to their reading habit as few homes have libraries. There is, therefore, a need for the home to assist the school in the education of children. Gomathi and Sivasubramanian (2019) in their research also recommended that there must be a fixed time for reading a variety of reading material that will appeal to students and that adopting different methods to arouse the interest of students could enhance their reading habit.

Unfortunately, researches about farmer children's reading interest in Indonesia are known as still very limited. Therefore, this research is expected to be able to enrich literatures about researches about farmer children's reading interest in Indonesia, especially in Cengkong Village, Karawang, West Java.

### 3. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research was a qualitative study with a case study method. In this research, the informant selection used purposive sampling. According to Sulistyobasuki (2010, p. 202) purposive sampling technique is samples choosing done by researchers based on criteria determined by the researchers. Informants chosen are eight people, consist of farmer children and their parents. The informant criteria are children from farmer family, elementary age (11 – 12 years old), and students in Cengkong Public Elementary School IV. The informant data mentioned are:

Table 3. Informants

No.	Informant	Gender	Age	Description
1.	R1	F	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grader
2.	R2	F	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grader
3.	R3	M	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grader
4.	R4	M	11	5 <sup>th</sup> grader
5.	R5	F	49	R1's parent
6.	R6	F	50	R2's parent
7.	R7	F	47	R3's parent
8.	R8	F	60	R4's grandmother

Data collection was conducted during February 2019 – April 2019. The research location is in the area of Cengkong Village, Purwasari Sub-district, Karawang District, West Java. The interview was conducted in Indonesian language (bahasa Indonesia) and also local language, which is Sundanese (basa Sunda). The District of Purwasari produces paddy rice and contributes to the productivity of paddy rice in the district level. Five villages who have incomes in the sector of agriculture are Sukasari, Tegalsari, Karangsari, Cengkong, and Darawolong. Besides having potential on rice farming sector, those five villages also have cultivation business in forms of home industry, such as straw mushrooms, banana chips, cassava chips, and salted eggs. Three of the villages, which are Purwasari, Tamelang, and Mekarjaya Villages, have major people who work in the sectors of industry and service.

#### **4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

In this part, the discussion will be focused into two parts. The first part is the session about reading materials favorited and needed by farmer children in Cengkong Village. The second part is the session about family support towards the development of farmer children's reading interest in Cengkong Village.

##### **4.1 Reading materials favorited and needed by farmer children in Cengkong Village**

Based on the interview result with the informants, it was known that the informants had tendency to like reading materials which possess abundant illustrations, pictures, colors, and the nature of fictional. This reflects from the interview with informants below:

*R3: "At home, I rarely read books. I read sometimes when there is homework. But, sometimes I also cheat by copying friend's homework, hehe. Then, after school, I eat, change clothes, and then play at home. After that, I recite Alquran (The holy Quran). But, occasionally I also herd goats. I read comic books, sometimes after school and in the evenings."*

*R1: "Sometimes, when there are new books at home, I'd like to read it myself. Then, after I come home from school, I change clothes, eat, and go to madrasa. I sometimes read textbooks after school, but it is only if there is homework or when my mother tells me to. While for storybooks or fairytale, I usually read them in the*

*evenings or before going to bed. I feel delighted since I like to read books. If my teacher or my mother tells me to read, I am pleased and happy. I like reading fairytale about the mouse deer and also storybook about our prophet which I'd choose over textbooks, hehe."*

*R2: "At home, I usually read storybooks and fairytale because it is fun and more interesting. There are a lot of stories and also pictures. Textbooks, on the other side, are tedious."*

*R4: "Nope, no, not interested. When I am told by my teacher or my grandmother to read, I will do it though. But, I prefer reading juz amma. If talking about reading textbooks, I am not really into it."*

According on the answers above, those four informants tended to have reading materials preference of fiction books. It is because fiction books have interesting storylines, pictures, and themes. In this case, it can be seen that children are still in their imaginary times. With imagining, children are capable to express their creative ideas. Hence, children prefer reading materials that are fictional. The other reason why children love fiction books is because they have abundance of pictures, colors, and illustrations inside. Most of fiction books will encourage the readers to imagine about things provided in the books. It can boost the development of children's imagination so that they are able to stimulate, grow, and increase their potentials of intelligence and creativity.

The availability of reading materials is also important in reading activity. Reading materials should be available in a good manner and suitable for kids' needs. If the reading materials are not suitable or unavailable, it may inhibit the development process of children's reading interest. Below are interview quotation of the informants concerning about the availability of reading materials they had:

*R1: "Books I have at home are fairytale, the mouse deer. There are also textbooks and religious books. I also had received storybooks about prophets from my mother."*

R2: *"I usually read storybooks at home. There are textbooks, recital books, and storybooks. There are also drawing books and writing books, hehe. I have never received reading books from my mother."*

R3: *"In my house, there are textbooks, recital books, storybooks, comic books, and also writing and drawing books. I have never received books as gifts, but when I continue to a higher grade at school, I receive writing and drawing books, hehe."*

R4: *"Hm, in my house there are textbooks, juz amma, and berjanji. Berjanji is a kind of holy books. I do not have other than those books. My grandmother never gave me books."*

From the answers of the four informants above, it can be seen that the availability of reading materials they had was limited and less varied. Books owned were only around textbooks, religious books, comic books, and storybooks (fiction books). Comic books tend to be owned by boys, while the girls prefer to collect storybooks and fairytale.

Reading materials availability is one of the factors that are able to bring up children's reading interest. In that way, the family and school sides are supposed to be able to work on the reading materials availability more for children's reading activity. This is in accordance with the statement of Kasiyun (2015) in his research that children will read if there are reading materials. In this case, parents also have to possess the reading hobby. Beside parents' role, school and local government are supposed to provide reading materials which are allocated as shared facilities.

#### **4.2 Family support towards the development of farmer children's reading interest in Cengkong Village**

Driving factors of reading interest may come from inside and outside the children. Beside learning and teaching activities done at school or home, the most predominant driving factor is family support. It is because family is an essential component in the development of children's reading interest. To discover about this, researcher asked the availability of reading interest and the involvement of parents and family in reading books for them.



R5 (R1's parent): *"Books at home are textbooks, religious books, storybooks, Alquran, and fairytale about the mouse deer. I rarely read books for my kids. I also have never given presents for birthday or anything else. But, when I am away and then see interesting and good books, it reminds me of my children and I may end up buying those for them. Books I buy are around books about prophets, about heaven and hell, and anything about religion."*

R6 (R2's parent) : *"No other than textbooks and religious books which are also from school. If there are books on sale, I would buy them, either from bazaar or anything similar at school. But, I only buy the books, haha. At school, there are tajweed books or something similar to that, and it keeps us buying books. But, that book is only read at school, they said. Hehe I never do that, even Tika is always outside playing. I also never give presents hehe, she rarely reads anyway. I am also not often at home, sometimes I am at the rice field."*

R7 (R3's parent): *"At home, there are only textbooks due to the fact that my son (R3) doesn't go to madrasa, unlike his friends, but just recites Alquran. For exception, there are also comic books which his older sibling bought him. I never read him books, he seems to not want it anyway, hehe. Buying presents at his birthdays? Never. Sometimes, his older sibling bought comic books unintentionally."*

R8 (R4's grandmother): *"Yea, textbooks and books for reciting only. I never storytell to R4, I even cannot read. I let him read by himself. I also never buy presents, hehe."*

According to the informants' answers, it is known that informants' parents rarely accompany the children reading. Furthermore, out of four parents of four informants, there was only one person who would give books as presents to their children. Kasiyun (2015) mentioned that giving books as presents for kids is an activity which can increase children's reading interest.

## **5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Research results showed that those four farmer children in Cengkong Village had already owned interest in reading. It is showed from their enthusiasm to read books with their own desire and to find information on the reading materials. But, unfortunately, this reading interest did not get enough encouragement from various factors such as the lack of support and supervision from parents, school, and local government. Besides, the lack of reading materials availability at home and school also became factors to the less developed reading interest.

The types of reading materials that were interesting and needed by these four farmer children were books which have abundance of illustrations, pictures, and colors. That kind of reading materials mentioned is fiction books. Another type of reading needed beside fiction books is textbooks with pictures and colors. The difference of reading materials selection of boys and girls was that girls preferred storybooks with pictures and books about fairytale. While on the other side, boys tended to like comic books. Beside fiction books, they also had interest in religious books.

Other than that, family support towards children's reading interest was still lacking. Parents had to work in farmland and it was difficult for them to spend times with their children, not to mention for reading activity. This was caused by economic factors and work demands. Besides, there were differences between landowners' children and landless farmers' children. Landowners' kids had more spare time with their parents, compared with landless farmers' kids with their parents. Furthermore, parents assumed that school was able to give learning lesson and reading activity for children as well. Therefore, parents are expected to give more time to accompany children reading.

## **6. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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